

REMARKS

Initially, applicants thank the Examiner, Mr. Tu M. Nguyen, for the helpful and courteous interview extended to their undersigned representative on December 9, 2004.

The claims have been amended as proposed during the interview with Mr. Nguyen. Specifically, claims 1 and 11 have been amended to recite ranges of concentrations of noble metal and fire-resistant inorganic oxide in the catalyst and the source of the noble metal contained in the catalyst used in the method of the present invention. Claim 7 has been amended to recite an amount and source of the transition metal in the catalyst used in the method of the present invention. A new claim, claim 12, has been added to the application which recites that the catalyst used in the method recited in claim 1 further contains a rare-earth metal.

The limitations regarding the amount of the noble metal and fire-resistant inorganic oxide contained in the catalyst are supported in the specification in the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10 and in the second paragraph on page 13, respectively.

The limitation regarding the source of the noble metal in the catalyst is supported, inter alia, in the specification in the second paragraph on page 9.

The limitations regarding the amount and source of the transition metal in the catalyst are supported in the specification in the first paragraph on page 10 and the second paragraph on page 9, respectively.

New claim 12 is supported in the specification in the paragraph bridging pages 10 and 11.

As noted in the Interview Summary, Mr. Nguyen agreed during the interview that the proposed amendments to claims 1 and 11 would render the claims allowable pending further search and consideration.

The amendments overcome the rejections made in the Final Action because all of the rejections are based on Nomura et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,174,111 ("Nomura"). Nomura discloses and suggests nothing concerning the amount and source of the noble metal or the transition metal in the catalyst used in the method disclosed therein and fails to disclose or suggest the effects of using different catalyst materials in the purification of exhaust gas from a fuel-direct-injection type engine. Nomura also fails to disclose or suggest the use and effect of a rare-earth metal as a catalyst for purifying exhaust gas from a fuel-direct-injection type engine.

Removal of the rejections in the Final Action and a notice of allowability are believed to be in order and are respectfully solicited.

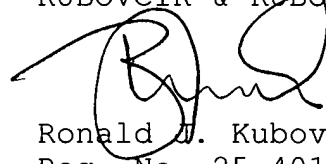
The foregoing is believed to be a complete and proper response to the Office Action dated September 29, 2004, and is believed to place this application in condition for allowance. If, however, minor issues remain that can be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

In the event that this paper is not considered to be timely filed, applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for any such extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 111833.

In the event any additional fees are required, please also charge our Deposit Account No. 111833.

Respectfully submitted,

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